

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Amendments/Status

Claims 21-27 remain pending in the application. Claims 28-37 are cancelled along with claims 1-20. Claims 23 and 27 have been respectively rewritten to assume independent form. Inasmuch as claims 23-25 and 27 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, these amendments are such as to place these claims in *prima facie* allowable form. Claim 21 has been amended to differentiate over the cited art and to read on the embodiment depicted in Fig. 5 of the instant application. Clear support for the amendment to claim 21 can be found in paragraph [0036] of the publication 2006/0062097 of the instant application.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Nomoto (U.S. 6,657,930). This rejection is overcome by the amendments to claim 21. The processing steps added distinguish over the disclosure of Nomoto.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomoto in view of Fukushima et al. (JP 10-21559). This rejection is overcome by the amendments to claim 21 which render the claimed processes non-obvious in light of the disclosure of the two references which are applied in this rejection.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby

made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
LOWE HAUPTMAN HAM & BERNER, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kenneth M. Berner".

Kenneth M. Berner
Registration No. 37,093

1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1111
(703) 518-5499 Facsimile
Date: May 8, 2008
KMB/KT/ser